

Nelson Open Table Tennis Tournament 2017.

The Open saw a pleasing increase in entries although there was a decidedly lack in the ladies so that mixed singles events were held in some grades. The tournament ran smoothly with all players cooperating in keeping to short warm ups and assisting with umpiring without complaint. This enabled most games to progress quickly until 'log jams' occurred when players had commitments in two grades over singles and doubles. At least this then enabled some players to get breaks whilst others had to play almost continuously. Paul's team worked well together from administration to running the canteen and doing the certificates.

It was great to see such a range of ages from Lionel Wells in his nineties competing strongly, to juniors trying their hand to get experience by having ago in open events.

Unless mentioned players were from Nelson.

Four people entered the under **21 field**. The winner was Nathan Watson [ML] ahead of Alex Kennedy [ML] in the Round Robin for singles. He combined with Alex to take out the doubles against Paul McCliskie and Fergus Currie 11-5,11-7,11-6. The local guys gained lots of experience from their encounters.

The **second woman's singles** was a Round Robin. Glenda Ferguson took top spot ahead of Jaqui Wood [ML]. Alanah Op den Buysch pushed Glenda to five but had to accept third spot. In the doubles Jaqui Wood and Marion Wood [ML]overcame Glenda Ferguson and Alanah Op den Buysch 11-13,11-6,11-7,11-6 for the title.

The second mixed doubles was a Round Robin. Paul and Alanah Op den Buysch took top spot over Russell Holden and Glenda Ferguson with John Armstrong and daughter Rosie getting experience in the big time.

The **second grade men's singles** had a Round Robin moving to a knockout draw of ten players. Over these matches there were many very close encounters. Fabien Girarden proved a giant killer as he made his way to the final where he was outplayed by Paul Op den Buysch 11-7,11-5,11-8.

Paul combined with Greg Smith to also win the second level doubles against Phil Osborne , and Mark Wilson [C]. This was a tight encounter with some great rallies. They won from behind 8-11,9-11,11-7,11-8,11-6.

The over 40's Mixed Doubles saw the local team of David and Debbie Watson going down to Marlborough's Warren Haszard and Jaqui Wood three straight in the final.

The men's singles saw good entries with ten people getting through to the knockout stage. The top half of the draw was dominated by Daniel Astle whilst the bottom was by Canterbury's Derek Partridge. These two met in the final where Derek was able to get one game off Daniel before being defeated. Both players had tighter matches in their semi finals.

Daniel Astle combined with Mark Nalder to overcome Phil Osborne and Greg Smith in five for their semi final whilst the other semi saw Gregg Davey and Derek Partridge [C] get by in four over Paul Op den Buysch and Mark Wilson [C]. Astle and Nalder claimed the title over Davy and Partridge by winning 11-8,11-7,8-11,11-8.

The over 50's Mixed doubles once again saw David and Debbie Watson outplayed by Warren Haszard and Marion Wood in the final 6-11, 12-10,7-11,9-11. This was a very entertaining encounter to watch.

The over 50's men's singles had eight players through to knockout stage. Gregg Davey [C] showed cunning and class to beat Mark Nalder in the final three straight whilst Mark did well to claim the scalp of Derek Partridge in his previous game.

Gregg Davey and Derek Partidge [C] claimed the doubles title by beating Mark Nalder and Malcolm Wong [W] 11-7,11-4,11-9 in the final.

In the over 60's men's six players got to knockout where some lively encounters were seen. Mark Wilson [C] had an easy ride to the final whilst Alastair Naysmith had a sizzler against Mark Nalder which went to five. Naysmith had to work hard for his title winning 7-11,11-7,11-9,13-11 for his last battle.

Mark Nalder got his revenge when teaming with Malcolm Wong [W] to beat Alastair and partner Gary Basher in the final three straight.

The over 70's mixed singles saw Alastair Naysmith opposing Gary Basher in the final which he won in three. They combined to take the doubles over John Storey and Peter Webster in a Round Robin event. *By now they were getting rather tired I think!*

The **Open mixed doubles** saw Gregg Davey [C] and Marion Wood [MI] outclass the father daughter John and Rosie Armstrong combination in the only entries. It was great to see the next generation trying their hand.

The **Open doubles** showed class in all encounters with some amazing shots, deftness as well as power play with cunning and guile. Top seeds Jason Granville and Ben Collins [W] showed their class in the final against second seeds Daniel Astle and Paul Op den Buysch. Their slight edge was all that was needed in an intense encounter winning 9-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8, 11-6.

The **Open Singles** semi finals and final were played with extended areas. This enables some spectacular play to be seen. Jason Granville [W] had a dramatic game against Gregg Davey [C] in his semi which went to seven. The games see-sawed with brilliant shot making and doses of edges and nets for winners. Jason eventually won, taking the last two games easily.

The second semi saw Ben Collins [W] have a straight four set win over Daniel Astle that was tight to start with but became easier in the latter stages.

The **final** between Collins and Granville was an enthralling encounter to observe with both players pushing shots to the limit with speed and dexterity. Heavy topspins were followed

by deft blocking and excellent positional play. Both players had their chances to lose them at critical times yet Ben came out on top 8-11,11-6,11-9, 12-10,10-12,11-6 for the title.

On Sunday junior events were held over three age groups with players from Marlborough and Canterbury attending.

Seven players had a Round Robin to qualify for the main knockout draw in the **girls under 13yrs**. Qualifiers were Grace Astle, Vanessa Wood-Lin[M], Madison Briggs and Rosie Armstrong. Vanessa had a close match to win the final 11-8,11-6,9-11,12-10 over Rosie Armstrong.

Grace Astle partnering with Rosie Armstrong outplayed their opposition to take the doubles title with runners up being Ella and Una Gunn.

The boy's under 13yrs saw Finn Brown taking the top spot over Kvido Tayerle 2-11,11-9,9-11,11-7, 11-9 in a close fought game with some fortuitous edges helping at crucial times. Both players won their semi finals in four against Romeo Monopoly and Rory Osborne [ML]respectively.

Rory Osborne [ML] partnered Kvido Tayerle to win the doubles against Romeo Monopoli and Finn Brown 11-2 in the fifth. Kvido partnered with Grace Astle to take out the mixed doubles over Finn Brown and Rosie Armstrong in three straight sets.

In the **under 15 yrs** the girl's singles with five entries had a Round Robin with the title going to Hannah Smit [ML] and runner up being Vanessa Wood-Lin [ML] Most games went with relatively easy score lines except for the Wood-Lin - Rosie Armstrong game which went to five where Wood-Lin won 11-6 in the fifth.

The boys title went Kvido Tayerle who overcame Bruno Murray 11-8,11-6,7-11, 11-6 in the final. There was some excellent shot making in this encounter from both players. Kvido partnered Finn Brown to outlast Bruno Murray and Sam Schultz in the boy's doubles. It was a fine encounter which was reflected in the score line 9-11,11-5,8-11,11-9,11-8.

The mixed doubles was a Nelson victory over Marlborough with Finn Brown and Rosie Armstrong beating Rory Osborne and Hannah Smit 4-11,11-3,11-9,8-11,11-8. Good developing skills were seen from all four players.

The **under 18 mixed singles** had Hannah Smit taking on the boys in the Round Robin. She fought courageously against Sam Shultz going down 10-12 in the fifth to miss out on the main draw. Alex Kennedy [ML] had an easy victory over Sam Shultz to get to the final where he beat Escher Kendrick in three for the title. Escher had an enthralling match against Bruno Murray which went to five where he scraped through 11-9 to take Bruno out.

Alex Kennedy partnered Escher Kendrick in the boys doubles to win the final over Sam Schultz and Bruno Murray 11-9,9-11,11-6,11-4.

In all junior games the players excelled themselves with their court manners and respect for the umpires and administration.